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ABSTRACT

The Legal Education Goals and Learning (LEGAL) project in the Dade County Public Schools, Florida, is an elective course for students in grades 7-12. Because extensive annual evaluations of this project since 1976 had been extremely favorable, the size and scope of the 1984-85 evaluation was reduced. It investigated the extent to which LEGAL achieved its primary goals in schools offering LEGAL courses for the first time. Ten social studies teachers and 10 percent of approximately 700 students enrolled in the new fall semester LEGAL courses were mailed questionnaires to obtain their views on LEGAL's support services, in-service training, and curriculum. Results showed that LEGAL teachers highly favored the provision of instructional support services. Among the students, 32 percent thought the quality of materials was better than that employed in other courses, 53 percent thought the quality was about the same, 49 percent indicated that the outside resources were also better. In regard to the provision of in-service training, 71 percent of the teachers believed they had received adequate training, though 86 percent wanted more training. The questionnaires, with results, are appended. (JAZ)

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DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EVALUATION OF THE 1984-85 ECIA, CHAPTER II LEGAL PROJECT

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EVALUATION OF THE 1984-85
ECIA, CHAPTER II
LEGAL PROJECT

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OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

JUNE, 1985

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Introduction

The 1984-85 LEGAL (Law Education Goals and Learnings) Project is an authorized course of study emphasizing criminal and civil areas and is presently offered as an elective for students in grades seven through twelve. It is funded by the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA), Chapter II, in the amount of $109,760, and is currently taught in over three-fourths of Dade County's junior and senior high schools, directly and indirectly serving approximately 40,000 students.

LEGAL has been extensively evaluated every year since its inception in 1976. Results of these evaluations indicated that the LEGAL Project had substantially achieved its goals each school year in terms of the three major project goals, i.e.:

1) expanding the LEGAL Project to non-user schools and classes,

2) continuing and/or expanding support services to schools currently using LEGAL; and

3) reinforcing and expanding linkages with resource agencies and organizations functioning at the local, state, and national levels.

More specifically, year by year examinations of LEGAL's activity logs and analyses of data obtained from teacher and student surveys have consistently shown that the LEGAL Project has expended considerable effort to increase the number of school administrators who were aware of the project, provided the appropriate instructional support services to LEGAL teachers and students; made available appropriate in-service training to all LEGAL teachers and maintained adequate inventories of LEGAL curriculum products. Additionally, local, state and national organization maintained and/or enhanced their support for the LEGAL Project and project products and activities were favorably evaluated by LEGAL teachers, resource personnel and student participants.

Description of the Evaluation

Since all previous evaluations of the LEGAL Project had been extremely favorable, the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) decided to greatly reduce the size and scope of the 1984-85 evaluation. Rather than spend time examining LEGAL documents and collecting and analyzing data gathered from schools which had been involved with LEGAL for many years, OEA decided to concentrate its resources on evaluating the extent to which LEGAL achieved its primary goals in schools which had never before offered LEGAL courses. Consequently, OEA staff sent questionnaires to the ten social studies teachers in those schools which were offering LEGAL courses for the first time. In addition, OEA personnel mailed student questionnaires to several of the above mentioned teachers to collect a ten percent pupil sample from the approximately 700 students who were enrolled in these "new" LEGAL courses during the fall semester.

In sum, this evaluation focuses on the extent to which new consumers of the LEGAL Project favorably viewed LEGAL's support services, in-service training, and curriculum.

Results

The following section contains detailed findings of the evaluation of the 1984-85 LEGAL Project. Initially presented are data which evaluate the appropriateness of the instructional support services LEGAL personnel provided to LEGAL teachers and students. Following this, an evaluation of the availability of appropriate in-service training for LEGAL teachers is discussed.

Provision of Instructional Support Services to LEGAL Teachers and Students

To ascertain the extent to which the LEGAL staff provided appropriate instructional support services to LEGAL teachers and students, an analysis of selected questionnaire items was made. Results showed that 71% of all teacher-respondents were aware of LEGAL curriculum products, and 57% had requested LEGAL materials. Furthermore, 100% of those respondents who had asked for curriculum materials believed they had obtained "adequate" materials "always" or "most of the time". Finally, 100% of the respondents thought materials were promptly delivered "always" or "most of the time". These results generally parallel those obtained in the previous (1982-83 and 1983-84) evaluations.

Analyses of the LEGAL pupils' responses to selected items on the student questionnaire indicated that 32% of the respondents thought the quality of materials used to support the instruction was better than that employed in other courses while 53% believed the quality of materials was about the same. Furthermore, 49% of the respondents indicated that the quality of outside resources used to support the instruction was better than the resources used in their other classes (40% felt the quality was about the same). These "approval ratings" are substantially lower than those given by consumers surveyed during the two previous LEGAL evaluations. It should be noted that the student participants involved in the earlier surveys were, for the most part, from the South and South Central areas (reflecting the primary concentration of LEGAL courses at the time) whereas, the "new" participants surveyed for this evaluation reside primarily in the North and North Central Areas. Finally, a majority of LEGAL pupils who had come in direct contact with resource personnel (such as judges, attorneys, etc.) rated all resource personnel categories "good", giving especially high ratings to attorneys and police officers. These latter results are essentially the same as those obtained in the two preceding evaluations.

Provision of In-service Training to Legal Teachers

To determine the extent to which the LEGAL Project made available appropriate in-service training to the "new" teachers involved with LEGAL, selected questionnaire items were analyzed to ascertain the quality of effort LEGAL employed to accomplish this task. Examination of teacher responses to the survey indicated that 71% of the responding teachers believed they had received adequate in-service training. Interestingly, 86% of the teachers who completed the questionnaires also stated that they would like more in-service training particularly in the areas of utilizing media resources, conducting mock trials, and utilizing community resources. Apparently, almost all of the LEGAL teachers who filled out this survey were eager to know more about LEGAL, despite the fact that almost three quarters thought the available in-service training was adequate. These results also parallel those obtained in the two previous evaluations.

Discussion/Recommendations

Analysis of all data collected for the 1984-85 LEGAL Project evaluation indicated that LEGAL has met its goal of providing appropriate instructional support services to students of LEGAL course and appears to have achieved this same goal with its "new" LEGAL teachers. Furthermore, LEGAL seems to have provided relevant in-service training to its "new teachers". Finally, as previously noted, it should be mentioned that the LEGAL Project is now disseminating more fully into some of the inner city areas and thus, is beginning to impact upon students whose enthusiasm for the project may differ qualitatively from its original consumers.

Notwithstanding the generally favorable results of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. LEGAL Project staff should insure the provision of inservice to new teachers regarding the areas of utilizing community resources, conducting mock trials, utilizing media resources, and developing instructional strategies. More specifically, prior to each fall semester, LEGAL personnel should contact staff in the Office of Educational Planning to obtain a complete list of all "new" LEGAL teachers. LEGAL staff should then personally invite all of these teachers to the various training sessions which LEGAL sponsors.

2. LEGAL staff should maintain regular phone contact (for at least a year) with each year's "crop" of "new" LEGAL teachers to help establish and maintain a strong communicative link between the project and the instructors who are new to the project.

Appendix A

LEGAL Teachers' Questionnaire Results

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LEGAL TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS COLUMN

1-2

1. How many years have you worked as a teacher? _____ 3-4

2. How many semesters have you taught LEGAL? _____ 5-6

3. What grade level(s) do you teach? _____ 7

4. In your opinion, is the LEGAL course worthwhile? 100% (1) yes _____ (2) no 8

5. Would you like to teach LEGAL next year? 86% (1) yes 14% (2) no 9

6. How would you rate the interest level of your students regarding the LEGAL course?

43% (1) high 43% (2) medium 14% (3) low 10

7. Indicate the extent to which you feel that each of the potential benefits of exposure to LEGAL, listed below, are characteristically attained by your students by selecting appropriate numbers from the rating scale below, and placing them to the left of each potential benefit.

RATING SCALE
1 - attained by most
2 - attained by some
3 - attained by few or none

(57%) 1 (43%) 2 learning facts about the law 11

(86%) 2 (14%) 3 learning to analyze situations or solve problems 12

(86%) 1 (14%) 2 developing a positive attitude toward the law 13

(57%) 1 (43%) 2 acquiring information regarding law-related careers 14

(86%) 2 (14%) 3 learning to think critically 15

(14%) 1 (86%) 2 learning to work cooperatively with others 16

(71%) 1 (29%) 2 developing an awareness that the legal system is not flawless 17

_____ other (write in): _____ 18

_____

_____

8. Check any of the following resource personnel who were utilized in your LEGAL class and rate the effectiveness of their resource presentation by placing a check (x) in the appropriate column to the right of each personnel category.

personnel	good (1)	fair (2)	poor (3)	
_____ judges	0	0	0	19
_____ attorneys	67%	35%	0	20
_____ police officers	100%	50%	0	21
_____ consumer law representatives	50%	50%	0	22
_____ others (specify):				23
_____ social worker		100%		
_____ law student	100%			

9. Did you receive adequate inservice training regarding LEGAL?

71% (1) yes 29% (2) no 24

10. Do you know what curriculum products are available from the LEGAL office?

71% (1) yes 29% (2) no 25

11. Did you ever request materials from the LEGAL Office?

57% (1) yes 43% (2) no 26

If yes:

a. Were you able to obtain adequate materials from the LEGAL Office? (check one):

33% always _____ sometimes 27

67% most of the time _____ never or almost never

b. Were the materials you ordered promptly delivered? (check one):

83% always _____ sometimes 28

17% most of the time _____ never or almost never

12. This school year, were any of your students involved in the Law Related Field Study Program?

57% (1) yes 43% (2) no 29

12. (Re: Law Related Field Study Program)
If yes:

a. How many students were involved? X = 25 30-33

b. Do you feel the program was worthwhile? (100%) yes ____ no 34
1 2

c. Please answer the following questions on the line provided by writing the one number from the scale below that most accurately describes your feelings.

strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree	
1	2	3	4	5	
			(100%) 4		I believe the Law Related Field Study Program's materials (i.e., the field study modules) were satisfactory. 35
			(75%) 4	(25%) 5	I think the support from the Community Resource organizations was adequate. 36
			(50%) 4	(50%) 5	I feel the coordination supplied by the LEGAL Project staff was sufficient. 37
			(50%) 4	(50%) 5	I believe the overall value of the Law Related Field Study Program is worth the effort involed. 38

13. This school year, were any of your students involved in the Mock Trial Program?

29% yes 71% no 39

If yes:

a. How many students were involved? X = 20.5 40-41

b. Do you feel the program was worthwhile? 100% yes ____ no 42
1 2

c. Please answer the following questions on the line provided by writing the one number from the scale below that most accurately describes your feelings.

strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree	
1	2	3	4	5	
		(50%) 3	(50%) 4		I believe the training I experienced to institute a mock trial was sufficient. 43
		(100%) 3			I think the support materials I received regarding the Mock Trial Program were adequate. 44
		(50%) 3	(50%) 4		I feel the services provided by the mock trial competition coordinator (i.e., the University of Miami Law School) were satisfactory. 45
		(50%) 3	(50%) 4		I believe the assistance I obtained from the LEGAL Project staff was adequate to support the Mock Trial Program. 46

14. This school year, were any of your students involved in the Community Law Project Program? (senior high school)

_____ yes (1) _____ no (2) 47

If yes:

a. How many students were involved? _____ 48-50

b. Do you feel the program was worthwhile?

_____ yes (1) _____ no (2) 51

c. At your school was the Community Law program (check one):

____ community based? (1) 52

____ school based? (2)

____ both? (3)

d. Please answer the following questions (regarding the Community Law Project) on the line provided by writing one number from the scale below that most accurately describes your feelings.

strongly disagree				strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

___ I believe the support that I received from Community Resource agencies was sufficient. 53

___ I think the students' abilities to conduct independent research have generally improved. 54

___ I feel the LEGAL Project materials (e.g., the Community Law Source Book and the filmstrip) for this program were satisfactory. 55

___ I believe the support which I obtained from the LEGAL Project staff was adequate. 56

15. Would you like additional inservice training? (check one):

86%	yes	14%	no	57
1		2		

If yes, in what areas? (check as many as apply)

17%	selecting materials	58
33%	utilizing community resources	59
0	conducting law-related field experiences	60
17%	constructing of evaluative instruments	61
50%	conducting a mock trial	62
17%	conducting moral dilemmas	63
67%	utilizing media resources	64
0	conducting a community law project (senior high)	65
17%	infusing LEGAL into other social studies courses	66
0	conducting legal research (senior high)	67
0	working with Court Observer Program (senior high)	68
17%	developing instructional strategies	69
0	other (describe briefly)	70

Appendix B

LEGAL Project Student Questionnaire and Results

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
LEGAL PROJECT
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS COLUMN

School Name: _____ 1 - 4

Dear Student:

As part of an evaluation of the LEGAL Project, we are surveying a number of students to determine how they liked their LEGAL course as compared to other courses and what they think they learned from their exposure to this course.

Please take a few minutes to respond to this questionnaire. After you have finished, place it in the envelope which has been provided, seal the envelope and return it to your teacher. In order to insure the confidentiality of your responses, we ask you not to write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Norman Proller, Evaluation Specialist
Office of Educational Accountability

1. grade level (check one)

0%	6	47.9%	9
11.3%	7	7.0%	10
12.7%	8	18.3%	11
		2.8%	12

5

2. In your opinion, how would you rate the LEGAL course compared to your other courses? (check one)

45.1% better than most 47.9% about the same 7.0% worse than most 6

3. How would you rate your interest in the LEGAL course?

43.7% high 53.5% average 2.8% low 7

4. Did you get out of the LEGAL course what you expected to get out of it?

88.0% yes 12.0% no 8

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
LEGAL PROJECT
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

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5. What did you get out of the LEGAL course? (check all those that apply)

97.2%	a. I learned facts about the law.	9
76.5%	b. I learned to analyze situations and solve problems.	10
71.8%	c. My attitude towards the law improved.	11
15.5%	d. My attitude towards the law became worse.	12
50.7%	e. I developed an interest in entering a law-related career.	13
50.7%	f. I learned to think critically.	14
57.7%	g. I learned how to work cooperatively with others.	15
57.7%	h. I learned that the legal system is not flawless.	16
40.8%	i. I developed skills which enabled me to work with people.	17
____	j. Other (write in) _____	
____	k. _____	18 - 20
____	l. _____	

6. Place a check ( ) before all of the following legal professionals with whom you had contact during your LEGAL course. Then rate the quality of each professional's instruction and/or assistance by placing a check ( ) on the appropriate line to the right of each relevant professional.

Check if you had contact with: Legal Professionals	Quality of Instruction: good	average	bad	
____ judges	50%	30%	20%	21
____ attorneys	63%	33%	4%	22
____ police officers	65%	29%	6%	23
____ consumer law representatives	30%	40%	30%	24
____ other (specify) social workers	24%	48%	28%	25
law students	48%	48%	4%	26

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
LEGAL PROJECT
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

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7. In your opinion, how would you rate the LEGAL course (relative to your other courses) in terms of: [Place a check ( ) in only one box located to the right of all the following statements.]	better than my other courses	about the same as my other courses	worse than my other courses	
a. how interesting the LEGAL course was	52%	43%	5%	27
b. the enthusiasm of the LEGAL teacher	55%	33%	12%	28
c. the organization of the LEGAL course	28%	59%	13%	29
d. the relevance of the LEGAL course to the "real world"	66%	25%	9%	30
e. the quality of materials (e.g. audiovisual etc.) used to support the LEGAL instruction	32%	53%	15%	31
f. the quality of outside resources used to support the LEGAL instruction (field trips, speakers brought into the classroom, etc.)	49%	40%	11%	32

8. Did you take part in any of the following programs? (check all those that apply):

27% Law Related Field Study Program 33

61% Mock Trial Program 34

7% Community Law Projects Program 35

If you were involved with any of these programs what were their good points? _____

_____

_____ 36 - 39

_____

_____

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
LEGAL PROJECT
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS COLUMN

8. (continued)

What were their bad points? _____

_____

_____

_____ 40 - 43

_____

_____

9. If you could do it again, would you take a LEGAL course?

80% yes 20% no 44

OEA: 5/8/85
EVAL,JM 84-85 Legal

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